IN THE SPECIFICATION:

On page 1, line 20, to page 2, line 15, please amend the paragraphs to read as follows:

Conventional spray covers possess a circumferential ~~pull~~ tension element of elastic material at their edge that is expanded by hand and placed into the coaming channel. The elastic pull element, e.g., a rubber cord, may be stitched to the edge of the spray cover or inserted into a hollow seam. A shaped or attached shaped piece is often involved that is specially shaped to improve the seal to the outer contour of the coaming.

Since the ~~pull~~ tension element lies in the channel of the coaming and is under tension, the spray cover cannot be removed from the coaming without other steps. The strength of the connection, and thus the strength of the seal against water, depends on the elastic tension created by stretching the spray cover by hand. This tension, of course, is limited. In particular, women cannot always exert the force required to mount the spray cover onto the coaming. It therefore often occurs that conventional spray covers are

unintentionally released in extreme situations in which they receive heavy water loading from high-pressure splashing or wave pressure in white-water situations, leaving the boat no longer protected against intruding water.

On page 3, line 9, to page 7, line 16, please amend the paragraphs to read as follows:

In the spray cover based on the invention, the ~~pull~~ tension element is ~~an elastic~~ a band or card that practically cannot be expanded by hand. The pre-tension required to secure the cover to the coaming and to seal the cover to the coaming is applied using at least one manually operable tightening ~~device~~fitting that is inserted into the ~~tightening strap~~tension element. The tightening ~~device~~fitting is so shaped that it is shortened by manual actuation, usually via a lever, thus creating the tension in the ~~tightening strap~~tension element. Even a weaker person may mount the spray cover or hatch cover according to the invention to the coaming using the tightening ~~device~~fitting. The ~~tightening strap~~tension element, when the tightening ~~device~~fitting is open, is inserted into the coaming channel, and the tightening ~~device~~fitting is then closed. This securing will withstand larger external loads since the ~~tightening~~

~~strap~~tension element is stretched (tensioned) only after it is inserted into the coaming channel, and since the spray cover or hatch cover is thus secured by an approximate form fit to the coaming.

The degree or measure by which the ~~tightening strap~~tension element cannot be expanded by hand, or only with great difficulty, must be understood in connection with this mode of function: It must be so difficult to expand that external forces acting on the cover are not adequate to cause sufficient expansion to allow the ~~tightening strap~~tension element to slip from the coaming channel. Suitable ~~tightening strap~~tension elements preferably are made of plastic, e.g., polypropylene.

Two tightening ~~device~~fittings are preferably inserted into the ~~tightening strap~~tension element. Depending on the tightening ~~device~~fitting design and the depth of the coaming channel, it is possible that one tightening ~~device~~fitting is not adequate to lengthen the ~~tightening strap~~tension element adequately so that it may be conveniently stretched over the upper edge of the coaming and placed into the channel in the coaming. Also, two tightening ~~device~~fittings provide a safety function, particularly when they are positioned along

the travel direction of the boat, one each at the front and rear ends of the cover. Kayaks suffer so-called jam accidents in which the boat is trapped under an obstacle such as a rock either by its keel or its deck. The rescuer who tries to extract the kayaker in such a situation must be able to release the spray cover, and thus requires access to at least one tightening ~~device~~fitting, which is almost always the case in this embodiment. Of course, each individual tightening ~~device~~fitting must be so adjusted for this situation that the spray cover is completely free of the coaming with one open tightening ~~device~~fitting, thus allowing its removal.

As a tightening ~~device~~fitting, it is possible to use the type of tensioner employed to secure the top of a barrel. The tensioner possesses an actuation lever that may be pivoted from its open position over a cam point into the secured position, shortening the sealing band when the lever is closed. The resultant lever action thus provides high tension in the ~~tightening strap~~tension element, and the cam-function design ensures that the actuation lever remains securely in its closed position.

Since the tensioning distance of a tensioner is limited, one preferably includes at least one adjuster to pre-tension the ~~tightening strap~~tension element by changing its length when using them. Such an adjustment fitting allows exact matching of the ~~tightening strap~~tension element to various coaming circumferences.

The ~~adjusting device~~adjustment fitting may also include a manually operable release device for spontaneous lengthening or separation of the ~~tightening strap~~tension element. Instead of the ~~tensioner~~tightening fitting, this release device is then actuated during an emergency of the above-mentioned type. The release may be so configured that a lower amount of force is required than for the ~~tensioner~~tightening fitting. For example, the ~~adjusting device~~adjustment fitting may be a self-affixing element at which an end of the ~~tightening strap~~tension element projects, and a brief tug on the extended end releases the clamp. Two ~~adjusting devices~~adjustmentfittings are preferably provided for emergency release for the same reason, and in the same configuration, as was described previously with reference to the tensioners.

A very advantageous alternative to the ~~tensioner~~ tightening fitting is a so-called pump clasp (or clamp) used as a ~~tightening device~~tensioner. Such pump clasp tensioners are also known. They are configured to work with a ratchet band or toothed belt that is drawn into the pump clasp step-by-step by repeated actuation of the lever. This allows the length of the ~~tightening strap~~tension element, with one end in the ratchet band and the other at the actual adjustment element, to be altered over a wide range and finally to be shortened to the extent that the necessary tension results. Special adjusting ~~device~~fittings are thus not required in connection with pump clasp tensioners.

Pump clasp tensioners have the further advantage that they may be completely opened very easily and spontaneously, either by means of a release button, or by placing the tensioning lever into a special release setting. Thus, one component may very advantageously provide the three functions of pre-tensioning, tensioning, and spontaneous, complete release of the ~~tightening strap~~tension element.

On page 8, line 11, to page 10, line 5, please amend the paragraphs to read as follows:

Inclusion of two pump clasp tensioners in the ~~tightening strap~~tension element is recommended for the above-mentioned safety reasons even when pump clasp tensioners are used as tightening ~~devices~~fittings. One must achieve a configuration in which the two pump clasp tensioners are positioned to the sides of the boat when the spray cover is in the use position, and thus may be easily actuated by the seated kayaker since, in contrast to the tensioner, simple actuation of the lever is necessary here to tighten the ~~tightening strap~~tension element.

If a boat capsizes, the kayaker must be able to free him/herself spontaneously with no problem even when panicked, which requires release of the spray cover. With conventional spray covers, this occurs simply in that the kayaker sitting in the boat presses with his legs against the spray cover, thus pulling the elastic pull element from the coaming. Configuration of the spray cover according to the invention allows the same semi-reflexive release of the spray cover in that the kayaker, using ~~presses~~ his/her knees, indirectly ~~against~~ acts upon the ~~release~~ opening mechanism of at least one tightening ~~device~~ fitting and/or ~~adjusting device~~ adjustment fitting by means of ~~the~~ a

release ~~mechanism~~ device provided on the upper side of the spray cover. The release device preferably includes a release band that stretches across the thigh or knee of the person sitting under the spray cover, that ~~reproduces~~ follows the upward movement of the legs, and that transfers ~~it~~ this movement by means of at least one pull strap to the ~~release~~ opening mechanism so that the ~~fastener~~ opening mechanism opens and releases the tightening ~~strap~~ fitting.

In order to simplify the initial mounting of the spray cover or hatch cover to the coaming, an additional elastic band that extends circumferentially along the edge of the cover and that may be stretched by hand may be provided that then is inserted into the channel in the coaming before the ~~tightening strap~~tension element is tightened using the tightening ~~device~~fitting or ~~tightening~~ tensioning devices. In contrast to the state of the art, this elastic band has practically no securing function during cover use. It merely simplifies the prior attachment of the cover to the coaming as long as the ~~tightening strap~~tension element is still loose. The elastic band may be a simple rubber cord, for example, such as are used for elastic cargo straps. The rubber cord is preferably stitched to the edge of the cover.

The seam used for this may also be used to form the hollow channel at the edge of the cover in which the ~~tightening strap~~tension element is held. Alternatively, the rubber cord or the ~~tightening strap~~tension element may be formed as a tube within which another band is placed. It may be adequate for the rubber cord not to extend along the entire length of the coaming, but rather only over a shorter portion of the path, with its ends secured to the adjacent ~~tightening strap~~tension element. This causes the ~~tightening strap~~tension element to be shortened by the elastic band between the securing points, and gives it light pre-tension adequate to secure the spray cover until it is shortened and stretched within the channel by the tightening ~~device~~fitting, and this shortening disappears because of the rubber cord.

In a further embodiment of the invention, the ~~tightening strap~~tension element may be held within a series of tubes or rings at the edge of the cover.

In use position of the spray cover, one or the other tightening ~~device~~fitting for the ~~tightening strap~~tension element lies within the channel in the coaming. If it is particularly deep, it may simplify operation to assign a

formed piece to each tightening ~~device~~fitting that lies between the tightening ~~device~~fitting and coaming that determines a specific position for the tightening ~~device~~fitting relative to the coaming in which the tightening ~~device~~fitting is easy to operate and/or in which the pull of the above-mentioned release ~~device~~fitting is particularly easily accessible. These shaped pieces may be of foamed plastic, for example. Separate formed pieces allow the use of conventional tightening ~~devices~~ fittings. Alternatively, the tightening ~~devices~~ fittings may also have a shape that is matched to the contour of the coaming.

On page 11, line 20, to page 12, line 19, please amend the paragraphs to read as follows:

When the kayaker has seated him/herself in the kayak 10 with the spray cover in position, the ring section of the spray cover 20 is attached to the coaming to form a seal. For this purpose, the edge of the spray cover 20 includes a circumferential, hollow tubular cavity formed by folding the spray cover material and secured by a seam 31. The seam 31 simultaneously contains a rubber cord 32 extending circumferentially that is relatively easy to stretch by hand. A flat, practically non-expandable tightening strap 33

of polypropylene is inserted into the hollow cavity 30. This tightening strap serves as the tension element of the present invention.

At the bow end of the spray cover 20, a tightening fitting in the form of a tensioner 35 is inserted into the tightening strap 33, for which purpose the tightening strap extends out of the hollow cavity 30 there. The tensioner 35 possesses an actuation lever 36 that may be pivoted out of an opening position (not shown) in which the actuation lever 36 stands out from the body of the tensioner into the locked position shown in Figure 5, whereby the cam point has been exceeded. In its opening position, the two ends of the tightening strap at the tensioner are far apart, but this separation is reduced by pivoting the actuation lever into the secured position, whereby the lever action allows tension to be applied to the tightening strap.

On page 13, lines 5-18, please amend the paragraph to read as follows:

An ~~adjusting device~~ adjustment fitting 50 is inserted into the tightening strap 33 directly adjacent to the tensioner

35, by means of which the length of the tightening strap may be altered as long as it is not under tension. This is a self-adhering fitting of conventional design whose holding force increases as the tension in the tightening strap increases. The tightening strap may be passed once or several times through the fitting to guard against exceeding the highest-possible holding force of the adjusting device in order to reduce the tensile force on the fitting before it is held by the adjusting device. The tightening strap clamped within the fitting has its short end extending away from the fitting. By pulling obliquely on this end, the clamping force may be completely removed, immediately releasing the tightening strap completely.

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